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Tuesday, May 10, 2005

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### McCollum joins global leaders in the fight against malaria



Washington, D.C. - Today, Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) joined Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS), Youssou N'Dour, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and Grammy-award winning African musician, Jack Valenti, President of Friends of the Global Fight, Timothy E. Wirth, President of the United Nations Foundation, and Jack C. Chow, Assistant Director General of the World Health Organization, in a press conference to recognize American support of the fight against malaria. Marking the first ever United States commemoration of Africa Malaria Day, the

event was part of a global effort to build awareness of the crippling effects of malaria on the world's most vulnerable citizens.

McCollum's statement follows:

"Good morning. Mr. Matthews, Senator Brownback, Mr. N'Dour, Mr. Valenti, Senator Wirth and Dr. Chow - it is a pleasure to join you today.

Whether you are from Minnesota or Mozambique, Kansas or the Congo - we all want good health for our children and ourselves. We all want the opportunity to be free from want and the hope that tomorrow will be a beautiful day, maybe even better than today.

Sadly, for millions of families across the African continent, good health, opportunity and hope are all needlessly diminished or extinguished by malaria.

Now I'm from Minnesota so I know a lot about cold winters and just as much about mosquito filled summers, but in Minnesota our mosquitoes annoy us - they don't make us sick and they don't kill our children.


The human misery and economic destruction caused by malaria in Africa is a reality that must change.

And we have the tools to slow malaria's destruction - bed nets, improved sanitation, improved drug treatments, appropriate pesticide use and a committed global partnership to provide resources and to help strengthen national health systems to fight malaria as well as tuberculosis and HIV infection.

Every year across the African continent more than one million babies, toddlers and

**WEATHER**

**MSP**



Temp: 63 F  
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children under five years old die from malaria. This unimaginable number of children dying last year alone is equal to every single child under 15 years of age in my state of Minnesota.

One million African children dying in a single year from a preventable disease is beyond comprehension, but in fact it is reality and it is a reality that can and must be changed.

For those of us who are moms and dads, we know small children burning with fever don't scream, they whimper almost silently and they stare into your eyes looking for help. Their voices are not heard.

More than a million African moms stare back into their children's eyes equally helpless.

And tragically they watch them die from a disease that can be prevented, treated and defeated, if, if the world comes together with the resources, the determination and the urgency to defeat malaria.

Today we need to hear those one million tiny voices. Today we need to look back into the eyes of million mothers with our compassion and our commitment.

The leadership of the United States, along with other donor nations, when partnered with the Global Fund, the United Nations, W.H.O., UNICEF, along with health ministries and health workers across Africa - if we stand together - can transform the helplessness faced by millions of moms into the promise of surviving, thriving children and healthier families.

I am proud of the commitment Congress, the White House and the American people have made and will continue to make to overcome malaria and the suffering and poverty it causes. But there is much more work to be done. On-going American leadership and strong global partnerships are needed for Africa's leaders, health workers and citizens to successfully control malaria.

So, as we commemorate Africa Malaria Day, let me conclude by paying tribute to our partners - the partners we must not forget. They are the heroes who struggle against malaria everyday. They are the community health workers and midwives, the doctors and nurses, the lab technicians and pharmacists. They work in village health centers, urban hospitals and rural clinics and they are saving lives, often times under very, very difficult conditions.

And together - as partners - their work along with our support, our commitment and a collective sense of urgency - we can save lives, keep families healthier and keep entire communities free from malaria's misery."

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